

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 3, 2016

### **University of Southern Indiana**

**Editor's Note:** This release and downloadable photo can also be found on our [website](#).

## **USI trustees approve new strategic plan, honorary degrees**

At its regular meeting on March 3, 2016, the University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees approved a new strategic plan that will frame the University's priorities over the next five years. The previous five-year strategic plan came to a close in 2015.

The approved 2016-2020 strategic plan includes three overarching goals:

- Excellence in Learning for the Entire USI Community
- Access and Opportunity by Design
- Purposeful and Sustainable Growth

"The work in our strategic plan has a grand purpose: to educate in ways that are lasting and prepare individuals to continue to learn." said USI President Linda L. M. Bennett. "We already have a strong reputation for educating learners of all ages, and our tagline is 'Knowledge for Life.' Shaping the future through learning and innovation is our focused effort. The next five years are going to be exciting!"

The three goals will serve as the primary focus points for the new strategic plan and will frame the strategies and metrics for that plan as it moves forward. Implementation of the new plan will begin immediately.

### **Honorary Degree candidates approved**

The Board approved spring 2016 candidates for doctoral, master's, bachelor's and associate's degrees, and candidates for honorary degrees to be presented at the Graduate Commencement Ceremony on April 29.

The honorary Doctor of Laws will be awarded to Dr. Donald E. Pitzer, professor emeritus of history and director emeritus of the Center for Communal Studies at USI.

In 1967, Pitzer joined the University's faculty when it was only two years old and holding classes at Centennial Elementary School, and participated in the groundbreaking of the present campus in 1968. He was the first chair of the History Department from 1976 to 1998. He initiated and directed USI's internationally known Center for Communal Studies from 1976 to 2007, and returned two semesters as acting director.

Pitzer graduated from Wittenberg University in his hometown of Springfield, Ohio, with a bachelor's degree in humanities in 1958. He earned his master's and doctoral degrees in history in 1962 and 1966

at The Ohio State University. In 1983, he was a scholar-in-residence at Harvard. At USI, he was given the Distinguished Professor Award in 1984 and inducted into the President's Circle in 2014. He led USI Commencement processions as Grand Marshal for nearly 15 years. He received the Hoosier Historian Award from the Indiana Historical Society in 2011.

The University will award the honorary Doctor of Humanities to Philip Hagemann, choral composer and theatre investor and producer from Mount Vernon, Indiana.

Hagemann has served as a choral conductor and composer in New York City. He has published 75 original choral compositions, 10 one-act chamber operas and two full-length operas. Two of his short operas, *Paris and Oenone*, and *The Nightingale and the Rose*, won national competitions of the National Opera Association. He also serves as vice president of Opera Index, a New York organization of opera lovers, which sponsors a competition for young singers, awarding over \$50,000 in prizes each year.

Hagemann has been an investor in and/or producer of more than 100 plays and musicals on Broadway, in London and Australia, and on U. S. and United Kingdom tours. As co-producer he has won three Tony Awards and one Olivier Award. He is involved with five shows currently running on Broadway: Eugene O'Neill's *Hughie*, Gloria Estefan's *On Your Feet*, *An American in Paris*, *The Book of Mormon* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

Since 1983, Hagemann has sponsored a competition for high school music students in Posey County, Indiana, the finals of which are presented as a free public concert each summer in Thrall's Opera House in New Harmony, Indiana, under the auspices of USI's Historic New Harmony.

In other business, the board received a report on the 2016 session of the Indiana General Assembly and heard updates on current and future construction projects.

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*Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana enrolls more than 10,000 dual credit, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students in more than 80 majors. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, College of Nursing and Health Professions and the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. USI is a Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged University and offers continuing education and special programs to more than 15,000 participants annually through Outreach and Engagement. USI is online at [www.usi.edu](http://www.usi.edu).*

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